

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA) issued the following statement on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the attack of Vincent Chin:

"Madame Speaker, as Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, I rise today in remembrance of Vincent Chin on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his attack.

"On June 19, 1982, Vincent Chin, a Chinese American, was brutally and fatally attacked by two white men who had recently been laid-off by an American automaker. Blaming their lost jobs on the rise of Japanese car companies, Chin's attackers, mistaking him for Japanese, sought retribution.

"Other than residing in Detroit, Michigan, Vincent Chin had no connection to the automobile industry. Vincent Chin, soon to have been married and celebrating his bachelor party, wasn't seeking trouble the night of his attack. Chin was attacked and killed simply for being of Asian descent. To add further insult, Chin's murderers charged with, and pleaded guilty to, a mere manslaughter charge. For murdering a man, each received a sentence of only three years probation and a \$3,000 fine - a mere slap on the wrist. Neither killer ever served any jail time.

"The attack on Vincent Chin, his untimely passing, and the insulting lack of justice and punishment for his murders galvanized a community that had not previously come together so broadly. For the first time, there emerged a self-defined Asian American and Pacific Islander racial identification that went beyond the progressive college-educated youth and into the working-class segments of the community. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino; waiters, lawyers, and grandmothers came together with a heightened awareness of the shared experience of racism and discrimination faced by Asian American and Pacific Islanders, regardless of ethnic and socioeconomic background. Twenty-five years after his fatal attack, Vincent Chin remains a contemporary martyr and rallying point for the Asian American and Pacific Islander Movement.

"While today is indeed a day to remember and honor the life and death of Vincent Chin, it is also a reminder that hate crimes are not a memory in a regrettable past. Unfortunately, the past twenty-five years remain littered with physical and verbal assaults and murders based in hate. Listed here are a few such acts:

1/29/1996

Thien Minh Ly

Shot and killed in Tustin, California

10/15/1998

Kanu Patel and Mukesh Patek

Shot and killed in Camp Springs, Maryland

8/10/1999

Joseph Ileto

Shot and killed in Chatsworth, California

9/15/2001

Balbir Singh Sohdi

Shot and killed in Mesa, Arizona

9/15/2001

Waqar Hasan and Vasudev Patel

Shot and killed near Dallas, Texas

7/30/2006

Iqbal Singh

Stabbed in Santa Clara, CA

My home district

10/21/2006

Robert Stanford, Song Sun Lee and Kam Yan Li

Shot and killed in San Francisco, CA

3/16/2007

Marie Martinez

Beaten on an MTA bus in New York City

"Madame Speaker, this small sampling from across this nation shows us that hate crimes remains an issue to be heard and combated by all Members of Congress and all Americans. I applaud my colleagues in the House of Representatives for recently passing the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007, H.R. 1592; recognizing the pervasive and contemporary nature of hate crimes in this nation. The death of Vincent Chin and the injuries and death suffered by the countless others victims of hate crimes serve as a heavy reminder for this nation to combat hate and continue in its quest for freedom and justice for all Americans."